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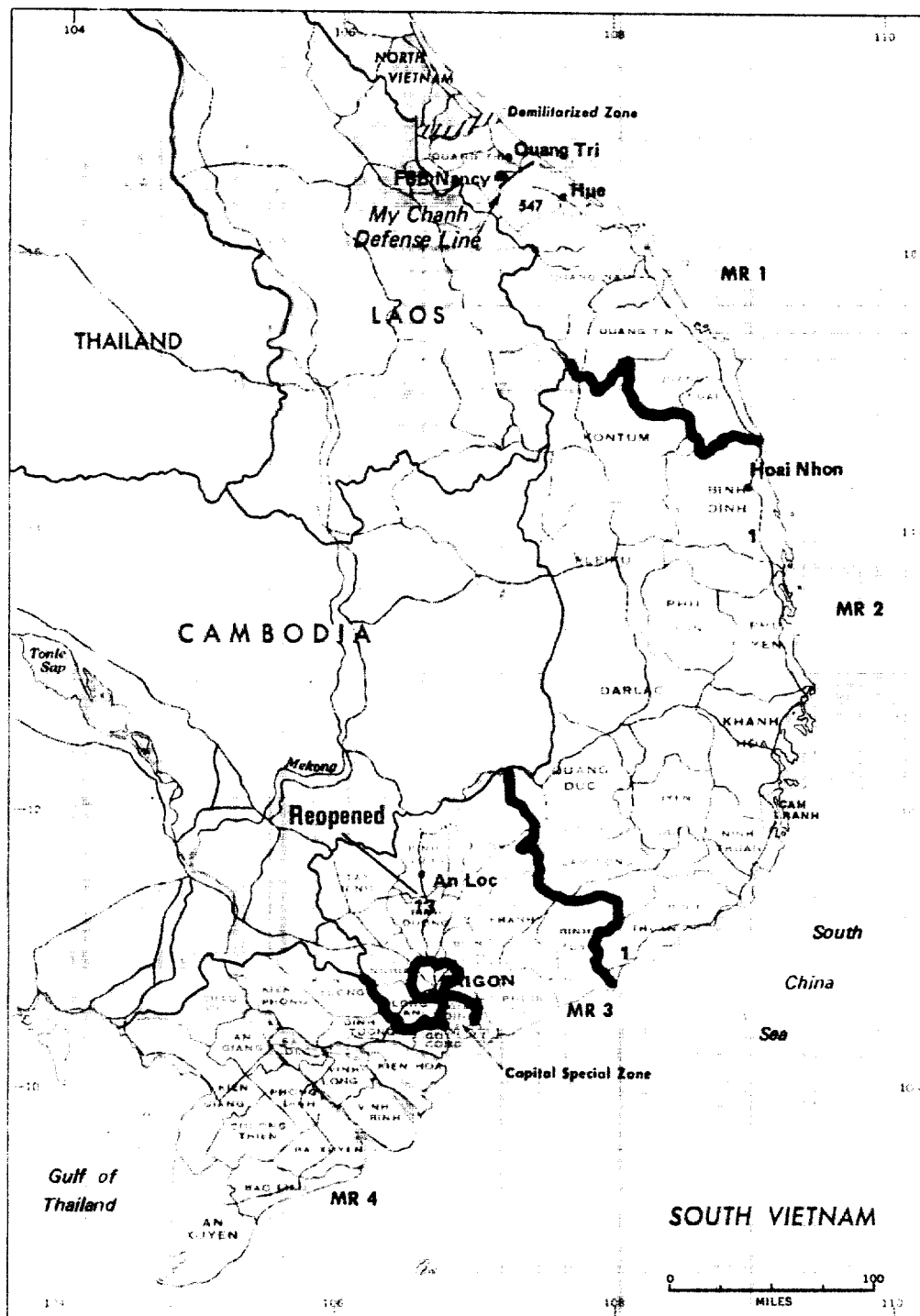
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SOUTH VIETNAM: Fighting around Quang Tri City remains relatively light, although the Communists are continuing intensive shelling of government forces and appear to be trying to step up activity on the government's western flank.

Government positions along Route 1 just below the My Chanh River are still being attacked. Two enemy prisoners captured just before the attacks started claim to be from units of the North Vietnamese 304th NVA Division that have been assigned the mission of interdicting Route 1 along the Quang Tri - Thua Thien province border. Other elements of the 304th Division have been putting pressure on government troops near Fire Support Base Nancy west of Route 1 and just north of the My Chanh.

In coastal Binh Dinh Province, South Vietnamese troops recaptured Hoai Nhon district town yesterday after meeting only light enemy resistance. The government's drive to retake the northern three districts of Binh Dinh may soon face more determined enemy opposition.

In Military Region 3, Route 13 south of An Loc is secured, but is not yet open to traffic because of mines and heavily damaged sections of the roadbed. Some Vietnamese civilians, however, have already begun to use the highway, and [redacted]

[redacted] a convoy of armored vehicles is being readied to carry supplies into An Loc. [redacted]

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CUBA: A carefully worded resolution concerning Fidel Castro's recent trip issued by the Communist Party central committee indicates that the Cuban leadership is less than satisfied with certain key aspects of Soviet policy.

Havana's major problem is with Moscow's policy of detente with the US. The resolution states that the "struggle against imperialism" must be "based upon the full awareness that imperialism's apparent cooperation with any truly revolutionary process is deceptive and false in the long run."

Havana's displeasure is primarily linked to what it views as a lack of Soviet support for North Vietnam. The resolution declares that victory in Vietnam requires "international solidarity" and points to statements made by Fidel during his trip. One of the strongest was made in Poland when he affirmed that "today Vietnam is the supreme test of proletarian internationalism...the supreme test of the principles of Marxism-Leninism."

Although the Cuban leader may be genuinely concerned with the fate of Vietnam, he is even more concerned over its possible implications for Cuba's security. He knows that Cuba cannot count on the unconditional support of the Soviet Union.

The resolution also hints that Cuba is upset with Soviet attempts to press for more orthodox economic policies in return for increased economic assistance. It asserts that assistance from socialist countries is a "moral right" of nations "where truly revolutionary changes are being made."

The vehicle chosen for the statement--a rare meeting of the central committee--is significant. By calling such a meeting now, Fidel Castro apparently wishes to emphasize the unity of the Cuban leadership as well as the importance of this statement.

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Although the resolution signals a degree of pleasure with the Soviets, Castro has few alternatives to continued close cooperation with Moscow. Cuba is economically and militarily dependent on the Soviet Union, and Fidel is unlikely to attempt any major alternation of this relationship at this time.



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USSR: The Soviets apparently are trying to improve their space suit technology in anticipation of future manned space requirements.

At a recent meeting of the joint US-USSR working group in space biology and medicine, Soviet participants showed great interest in the space suits used in the Apollo lunar landings. They mentioned a pending Soviet request to the National Aeronautical and Space Administration to buy several space suits from the US manufacturer.

The Soviets have not used pressurized space suits on manned flights since 1969, apparently believing them unnecessary for missions that do not involve activity outside their spacecraft. The Soyuz 11 cosmonauts who died during re-entry last year probably would have survived the sudden depressurization of their capsule if they had been wearing pressurized suits. The couches in the Soyuz re-entry capsule, however, could not have accommodated the three cosmonauts wearing the bulky Soviet suits.

Soviet development of space suits has lagged considerably behind US efforts. Those used by the US on Apollo flights are more compact and flexible than Soviet versions, allowing astronauts considerable freedom of movement. The advanced technology of US suits would help the Soviets in designing space suits for future Soyuz missions. A US-type suit also would be essential for a Soviet lunar landing where mobility would be a critical factor, although such a landing attempt is not likely for several years.

Changes in the Soyuz spacecraft probably were made as a result of the Soyuz 11 accident and were tested earlier this month during the flight of Cosmos 496--an unmanned Soyuz vehicle. As a safety precaution, the Soviets may also introduce a new

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space suit or a modified version of an older model during the next space mission. There are indications that the Soviets are planning a manned space flight within the next few weeks, and it probably will involve another extended stay by cosmonauts aboard a Salyut space station.

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THAILAND: Field Marshal Thanom's extension as supreme commander of the armed forces will probably delay other changes in the top leadership and postpone significant changes in Thai internal and foreign policies.

The extension, the second granted Thanom since he reached the retirement age of 60 last year, indicates that the deputy chairman of the ruling National Executive Council (NEC), General Praphat, still lacks sufficient popular support to move into the number one spot. Praphat, who has been Thanom's deputy for almost nine years, has been increasing his power at Thanom's expense in recent years, particularly since the constitution was abolished last November, and was seriously considering making his move for the top position this year.

Thanom presumably will also continue as chairman of the NEC, although the fate of the organization itself may still be unsettled. Thanom has been urging that the extra-constitutional NEC be abolished and the country returned to cabinet rule under a new provisional constitution. Praphat has successfully opposed such a changeover, presumably because his supporters now have the upper hand in the NEC bureaucracy. In announcing Thanom's extension, Praphat parried reporter's questions about returning to cabinet government.

The intense rivalry between Thanom and Praphat's supporters, which tends to have an immobilizing effect on government operations, is likely to continue. Military officers are also likely to be unhappy about the possibility that Thanom's extension will limit promotion opportunities. The government may alleviate some of the pressure from this quarter through the scheduled retirement of 25 general grade officers, although the top military leaders like Deputy Army Chief Krit will still find the path to promotion blocked for another year. Thanom's extension

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is also likely to increase frustration among less conservative elements in the army and the bureaucracy who believe that Thailand has failed to come to grips with its problems under Thanom's benign but unimaginative direction.

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UN - SOUTH AFRICA: Pretoria's acceptance of a UN representative who will concern himself with South-West Africa (Namibia) does not resolve the conflict over self-determination for that South African - administered territory.

In response to Secretary-General Waldheim's report to the Security Council on South-West Africa, South African Prime Minister Vorster said he would meet with Waldheim's personal representative. Vorster said that the UN representative will be allowed to travel in South-West Africa "as may be necessary" and to meet all sections of the population, but he insisted that these visits must take place by mutual agreement.

UN officials hope that this agreement will give the UN a foot in the door to help nudge South-West Africa toward independence on a territory-wide basis. The South African Government, however, plans to advance each of the territory's 11 tribal homelands toward independence individually. The government has promised to introduce legislation next year to raise the Ovambo people--the territory's largest ethnic group--to "self-governing" status. This is the last stage before eventual independence under South Africa's apartheid policy. The Kavongo homeland administration announced earlier this week that it will ask the government for similar action. There is no established timetable for the homelands to become independent, and after reaching this status they will remain almost totally dependent on South Africa for their survival. Although Vorster stated that implementation of his government's homeland policy is not "irrevocable," South Africa clearly intends to pursue apartheid, hoping at the same time to deflect international criticism by continuing a dialogue with the UN.

The Security Council probably will meet early next week on Waldheim's report. The result is uncertain, because Communist and African members of

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the Council might take the position that South African moves in South-West Africa make further efforts by the secretary-general useless. [REDACTED]

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NOTES

LAOS: Lao Communist leader Souphanouvong's latest message to Prime Minister Souvanna contains no new proposals for settling the war in Laos. The letter refers to earlier Communist proposals and repeats the Communist line that any progress toward a settlement depends on a US bombing halt throughout the country. It does not rule out, however, additional preliminary contacts between Souvanna and Souk Vongsak, the Communists' envoy. [REDACTED]

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CHILE-USSR: Moscow has offered to provide plants and technical assistance to expand Chile's copper products industry. The USSR also agreed to purchase \$87-million worth of finished and semi-finished copper products during 1973-75. Despite earlier efforts by Chile to develop its copper manufacturing industry, its sales of manufactured copper goods this year are expected to be only \$13 million. Moscow also will buy some 130,000 metric tons of primary copper, currently valued at \$134 million, during the same three-year period. [REDACTED]

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